COMIC SHOP NEWS

Warlord of Mars
Dejah Thoris

Dejah Vu

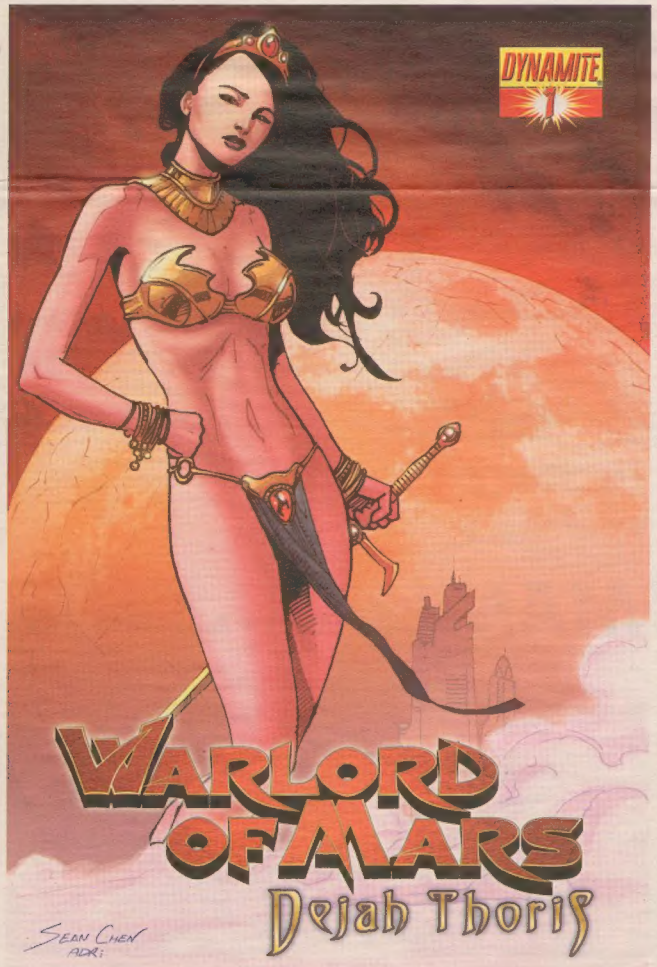
In the pages of ***Warlord of Mars***, writer *Arvid Nelson* retells *Edgar Rice Burroughs'* sword-and-planet tale of John Carter, an Earthman who finds himself relocated to Mars, where he becomes involved in a series of fantastic adventures involving the princess Dejah Thoris, the warrior Tars Tarkas, and many other memorable characters.

But just who *is* Dejah Thoris? What as she doing prior to John Carter's arrival on Mars? Those are the questions that Nelson intends to explore in the four-part ***Warlord of Mars: Dejah Thoris*** limited series.

Back in ***CSN #1209***, Nelson mentioned that he was relatively new to the work of *Edgar Rice Burroughs*—in fact, he had never read ERB's work prior to landing ***Warlord of Mars***. He's had time to read all of Burroughs' Mars novels in the intervening months, and he's found plenty of information that helped him to expand on Dejah Thoris's backstory. "Burroughs is more fox than hedgehog," Nelson said. "What amazes me most about the novels is how consistently innovative and weird they are. How could you *not* love a story called 'Skeleton Men of Jupiter'?

"I'm definitely more of a hedgehog. There are dozens of fantastic ideas in the first novels that Burroughs never addressed because he was so busy coming up with new stuff. So I want to expand on the first books, follow the tantalizing breadcrumb trails Burroughs left behind but never followed himself."

What's the premise of the ***Dejah Thoris*** limited series? "Martians don't age, and they don't die unless they're killed. So the Dejah Thoris story takes place 400 years before John Carter's time. It's the story of how Helium, Dejah Thoris's city-state, came to be the greatest on Mars. It's also the story of her first suitor. Obviously, things with the suitor didn't work out—but to find out why, you'll have to read the story. It involves a dark secret from Mars's ancient past."



Rather than casting Dejah Thoris as a victim or a helpless female, Burroughs presented her as a courageous, sharp-witted, and independent woman. Did his take on Dejah Thoris make it easier for Nelson to focus on her as a solo star? "Dejah Thoris's independence, courage, and intelligence makes her a natural heroine. She really deserves her own series. I can't help but feel it's something Burroughs wanted to do himself but never got around to. I hope my version of Dejah Thoris is as close to Burroughs's as possible! But I'll leave that up to readers."

In ERB's Mars novels, Barsoom is a brutal, savage world, in some ways a post-apocalyptic culture. Are you going to explore how it got to that state? Will we see an earlier, more glorious Martian culture? "I think some mysteries are best left alone. If you open Al Capone's vault, you're in for a big let-down. I definitely want to involve the ancient Barsoomians in my original stories, but I think I'll be most effective if Mars's dead past remains mythical and mostly out of reach. That way, readers can come up with their own ideas about what it was like. The stories in your head are always better than the ones you actually write."

One element of Martian history that Nelson *will* explore is the nature of the war between the two Martian city-states. "Four hundred years before Carter's time, Greater and Lesser Helium are at war with each other," Nelson said. "An unscrupulous and powerful warlord plays the two cities off each other so they won't challenge him directly. It's something people have been doing ever since they dropped out of trees (or hatched from eggs). The Romans were great at it. So were the European colonial powers. And that's how ***Dejah Thoris*** opens up."

Nelson's vision of Mars sounds almost Greek in its city-state structure; do he see Mars as a science-fictional, almost post-apocalyptic take on the classical cultures of our own world? "That's a very perceptive comment," Nelson said. "In a lot of ways, Barsoom is like the city-sates of Ancient Mesopotamia. They're even sustained by canals, just like Ur, Sumer, and Babylon were supported by rivers.

"The comparison to the Greek city states is also very fitting. Your comment about the post-apocalyptic aspect of the Mars novels rings very true as well. There are so many parallels you could draw."

What sort of secret does Dejah Thoris uncover? "It's something to do with the forgotten past of Mars, a secret of the ancient Barsoomians," Nelson said. "The red spire of Greater Helium and the yellow spire of Lesser Helium are part of this secret. The ancient Barsoomians created both spires. No one in Dejah Thoris's time knows why, but they're going to find out!"

In preparing for this series, has Nelson worked out a unified Martian history/prehistory that will play a part in other stories? "The novels are epic. They deserve a matching history," Nelson said. "But doing that is like building a skyscraper out of legos. One brick at a time, that's what we're doing.

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

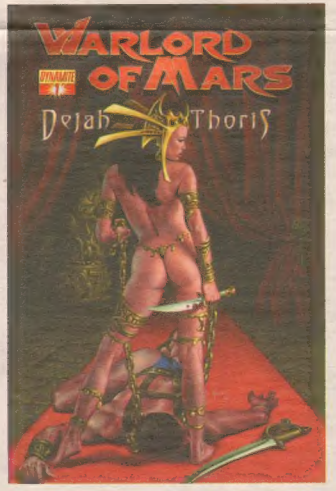
The *Dejah Thoris* series will, I hope, fill in a lot of details about the ancient Barsoomians and the rise of Helium itself."

In the course of his novels, Burroughs told the adventures of another Earthman, Ulysses Paxton, who was also transported to Mars. Will *Dejah Thoris* reveal that there were other earthly visitors? "We made sure to drop some hints about this in *Warlord of Mars*, but for right now it's not even on our radar screens. There's just too much to explore with Carter and Dejah Thoris."

Some Burroughs fans were concerned about a statement Nelson made in *CSN #1209*, when he said that "John Carter is a little bit of a doofus, too, and that's one of the things I love about him." There was some buzz about this, since ERB fans see John Carter as a courageous hero who also happens to be the best swords-

man on two worlds. How did Nelson get to that characterization, and does he still hold that view? "Hah! Yes, I do stand by that statement," Nelson said. "Carter admits as much himself. Quoth he, 'I verily believe that a man's way with women is in inverse ratio to his prowess among men. The weakling and the saphead have often great ability to charm the fair sex, while the fighting man who can face a thousand real dangers unafraid, sits hiding in the shadows like some frightened child.'

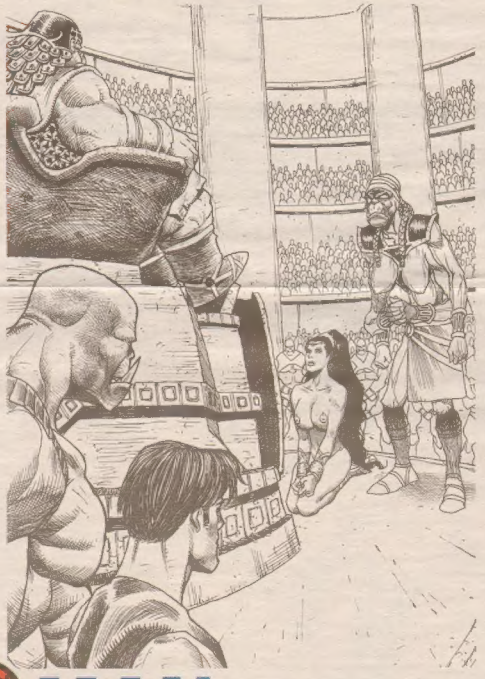
"So that's what I mean. One person's doofus is another's hero. I hope I'm a doof, too, if it means being like John Carter. He'd rather die for what's right than live for what's wrong. I really feel long-time fans of the novels will see I'm dedicated to presenting an authentic vision of John Carter. The proof, or lack thereof, will be in the stories themselves. Judge me on that basis, and I think you'll see I know what I'm doing."



Burroughs' Barsoom (the native name for Mars) is populated by two predominant Martian races: the red-skinned more human race (like Dejah) and the green-skinned Martians race to which Tars Tarkas belongs. But it's the common link between them that intrigues Nelson, and it's something he may explore more fully in the future.. "One of the most fascinating hints Burroughs drops in the first novel is that the green and red Martians have 'common ancestors.' I have an idea about what that means. I have talked about doing a three-issue bridge between the first novel and the second—I'd really like to address this idea in a series starring Carthoris, John Carter's son, and Tars Tarkas, exploring the secret of the common ancestry of the red and green Martians. If Dynamite thinks I'm the right person to tell the story, then I'm excited to do it. The Mars novels have become very important to me. Having the opportunity to share my love of Barsoom with so many people is a very great honor."

Dynamite has been pleased with the response to *Warlord of Mars*, but they'd love to see even more readers discover the wonders of ERB's Barsoom. "Even though it's one of our better selling books, I think the book has absolutely been underordered," Dynamite publisher *Nick Barrucci* said. " We've sold comfortably over 10% of issue #1 in re-orders—and the first issue has sold over 40,000 copies—thankfully we overprinted and we're able to capitalize on that. *Warlord of Mars #2* has had fantastic re-orders, they're going at a great clip and it look like orders for the third issue are actually going up—which is great in this market. It's truly a blessing. And I can't say enough about how happy we are with *Arvid Nelson's* writing and *Stephen Sadowski & Lui Antonio's* art on *Warlord of Mars*."

Since launching *Warlord of Mars*, has Barrucci discovered other Burroughs fans in comics professional circles? "Quite a few people have approached us and, again, the write stories we will jump all over to work with," Barrucci said. "For instance, *Bill Willingham* was surprised we were doing this and was interested—I don't think I'm speaking out of school saying that."



Is Dynamite working with any of those other creators on more *Warlord of Mars* spin-offs? "Right now, no," Barrucci said. "The backdrop of Dejah Thoris, the story of John Carter—those are the most important things to focus on. If the success continues, of course we'll look at other opportunities, but the success has to continue and the stories have to be there."

Warlord of Mars: Dejah Thoris #1, a $3.99 comic by *Arvid Nelson & Carlos Rafael*, is slated for March release. The book will feature cover art by *Arthur Adams, Sean Chen, Paul Renaud*, and *Ale Garza*. Incentive covers will include a *David Finch* sketch cover, a *Greg Land* sketch cover, and an *Arthur Adams* nude cover.

by Cliff Biggers

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SPIDER-MAN

BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER

NOW IT'S JUST YOU AND US, MOLEY.
AN' IN A MINNIT IT'LL JUST BE US!
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COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

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Marvel Sends an Archi-Tects Message

Marvel has big events in the works for 2011—and they've enlisted some of their most talented writers to take charge of those big events! As part of a plan referred to as Marvel's Architects Initiative, the company is calling on some of their biggest names to take charge of those events.

So who are the writers in Marvel's Architects? Well, they include:

- *Brian Bendis*, writer of ***Avengers, New Avengers, Death of Spider-Man***, the upcoming ***Moon Knight***, and an upcoming top secret project
- *Matt Fraction*, writer of ***Thor, Invincible Iron Man***, and a top secret upcoming event
- *Ed Brubaker*, writer of ***Captain America, Secret Avengers***, and a top secret upcoming new series
- *Jonathan Hickman*, writer of ***Fantastic Four*** (or is that ***Fantastic Three***?), ***S.H.I.E.L.D.*** and a top secret upcoming new series
- *Jason Aaron*, writer of ***Wolverine, Astonishing Spider-Man & Wolverine***, and a top secret upcoming new series

"These are five of the top writers in comics and they're writing some of the best Marvel Comics ever," *C.B. Cebulski*, SVP Creator & Content Development, said. "Each of their projects lays the groundwork for the future of the Marvel Universe and in 2011, their plans—which are being seeded in their current work as we speak—will come to fruition. There's never been a better time to be a Marvel fan!"

Thunder's Rumbling in the Background

When you hear the name "Alex Ross," what books come to mind? ***Kingdom Come***... ***Marvels***... ***Earth X***... ***Project Superpowers***... the ***World's Greatest Superheroes*** oneshots produced with writer *Paul Dini*... ***Bring the Thunder***...

Wait a minute. What was that last one?

If you're not familiar with ***Bring the Thunder***, you're not alone. This is one *Alex Ross* creation that's flying beneath the radar of many readers.

"Alex brought ***Bring the Thunder*** to Dynamite," publisher *Nick Barrucci* said. "He wanted us to help develop it with *Bob Teitel* and *George Tillman* at State Street Pictures. Our goal was to bring something new to the fans.

"State Street Pictures also worked with Alex to help develop the character and the story," Barrucci said. "One of the heads of State Street Pictures, *Bob Teitel*, went to college with Alex, and they wanted to work on a project together. We met and it evolved from there."

Writer *Jai Nitz* became involved with the project early on. "Nick and *Joe [Rybandt]* were pleased with my work, and I was looking for my next assignment as they were discussing ***Bring the Thunder*** with *Alex Ross*," Nitz said. "They sent him my scripts, Alex read them, and he requested me for the series."

For Nitz, ***Bring the Thunder*** is appealing on many levels. "I look forward to getting to work on something new," Nitz said, "and of course, getting to work with Alex was one of the biggest draws of all. Any time you get to mold and shape characters from the ground up, it's exciting. Getting to do that with *Alex Ross* is something that most writers will never experience, so I count my blessings that I get the chance, thanks to Nick and Joe.

OUR BATTLE IS A CONCERTO. EVERY PUNCH A STANZA FROM THE ORCHESTRA.
A SYMPHONY OF VIOLENCE.
A "GREATEST HITS" OF PAIN.
KRAAADOOOM

"One of the other benefits of being involved with something new like this is that there are no continuity rules with something new: this character can take a dark turn, that character can die, or that character can betray another character. There is no one telling us that we *can't* do something. We get to tell the best story we can."

Launching an original superhero concept in today's market can be very challenging. Until now, *Alex Ross* and Dynamite have primarily worked with established characters; what led to the decision to do something wholly original? "Launching an original concept like this *is* challenging," Barrucci said. "However, at the same time, we have to see if we can push the boundaries. We felt the idea and the overview made the project worth trying— nothing ventured, nothing gained."

Bring the Thunder deals with Wayne Russell, a soldier in contemporary Afghanistan whose life is changed when he uses an experimental weapon after he and his troops are ambushed. The weapon malfunctions, changing Russell's life forever. Of course, comics have dealt with soldiers-turned-heroes before; what makes this more than a 21st century Captain America or Captain Atom? "Well, I would argue that Captain America wasn't about 'soldiers' until *Mark Millar* and *Bryan Hitch* did the ***Ultimates***," Nitz said. "I'm not saying that other creators didn't create stories about that aspect, but the general opinion of most comic readers was that Cap led the Avengers, not that he was a soldier.

"In America during the 80s and 90s, the concept of the 'soldier' was largely devoid of war. Sure, there were some conflicts, but never a war like what we're facing in Iraq or Afghanistan. So for the modern reader, the concept of 'soldier' is much more prescient than it was fifteen or twenty-five years ago. Today, you have friends, brothers, fathers, sisters, and mothers in the armed services deployed overseas. People today identify with what that means. We try to meet that head on in ***Bring the Thunder***."

Does Russell continue to work with the military in his new super-powered capacity, or is he willing to let the armed forces continue to think he's dead? "Wayne has a real

WH-WHERE AM I??
RIGHT WHERE WE WANT YOU!
THIS IS FOR KIDNAPPING THOSE TWO LADIES AND DRAGGING THEM DOWN--
STOP, YOU MASKED BULLY!
I'LL THANK YOU TO TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF MY FIANCÉ!
"FIANCÉ"!?
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 12-76
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stanzfanz @ aol.com

BRING THE THUNDER
MORTALLY WOUNDED, WAYNE RUSSELL FIRES AN EXPERIMENTAL WEAPON, CHANGING HIMSELF... AND WARFARE... FOREVER!
A DYNAMITE ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION BRING THE THUNDER #1 PHOTOSCRIPT BY ALEX ROSS
PLOT/SCRIPT BY JAI NITZ ILLUSTRATED BY WILSON TORTOSA COVER BY ALEX ROSS CHARACTER DESIGNS BY ALEX ROSS
DYNAMITE ISSUE ONE RATED TEEN PLUS

sense of duty," Nitz said. "He is trying to put his life together after being lost for a year, but the military is a big part of who Wayne is. Wayne will try and set things right with the Air Force no matter what. The question is, will he get to them first, or will they find him? Big difference."

Nitz is hopeful that readers will discover ***Bring the Thunder*** as the series progresses. "***Bring the Thunder*** is a four-issue mini series, so we tell a complete story in the first four issues. We don't answer every question the reader might have, but we cover the big character issues. We establish Wayne, who he is, and how far he'll go to protect his family and do his duty for his country. In issue one, we saw how Wayne got his powers and how they cost him a year of his life. As the series continues in early 2011, we find out what happens to a man who disappeared on the battlefield—and what happened to his life at home while he was gone."

Barrucci is the first to admit that the response to the first issue was softer than he had hoped. "This is a sleeper book," he said. "It was definitely underordered; if reorders demand, of course, we will back to press with this book."

Bring the Thunder #2, created and plotted by *Alex Ross*, written by *Jai Nitz*, and illustrated by *Wilson Tortosa*, is scheduled for mid-January release.

Butcher, Baker, Mayhem Maker

Want a hero who's not afraid to do whatever it takes to complete his mission? Someone who makes Jack Bauer look like Barney Fife? Then *Joe Casey & Mike Huddleston* have just the book for you!...

Butcher Baker, The Righteous Maker #1, slated for March release, introduces a brutal hero for a brutal era. ""This one ain't for the faint of heart," Casey said. "***Butcher Baker*** is a sleazy mature-readers superhero book about a semi-retired 'patriotic' superhero who gets the call for one last adventure. It's everything you want a superhero comicbook to be. It's simultaneously iconic and subversive and a whole lot of fun."

"I don't think I've ever had this much fun working on a book before," Huddleston added. "Joe has created a ridiculously ultra-violent and over-sexed world unlike anything anyone has read before. It's intense!"

"I feel like this series is a creative pinnacle for both of us.," Casey continued. "I know I'm pushing the envelope in unusual ways with this one, and Huddleston's art is as good as it gets."

"Joe's at his best when he's pushing against the walls of convention," Image Comics Publisher Eric Stephenson explained. "If you've read his work on ***Automatic Kafka, Wildcats 3.0,*** and ***Godland,*** you're well aware of just how adept he is at stretching standard superhero tropes into something else, so believe me when I tell you the best is yet to come... If this book doesn't rock your socks off, then you're dead inside."

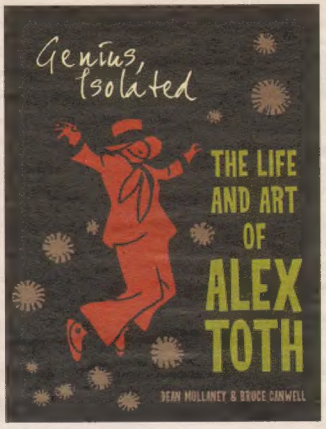
Butcher Baker, The Righteous Maker #1, a $2.99 comic, is slated for late March release.

Toth—Too Much Talent for One Book!

Alex Toth is one of the most respected and admired artists in comics and animation; during a career that spans almost two-thirds of a century, Toth has influenced countless illustrators with his bold linework, his unerring sense of design, and his superlative storytelling.

It turns out that Toth's talent is so expansive that it will take three books to fully cover it all!

Genius Isolated: The Life and Art of Alex Toth, written by *Dean Mullaney & Bruce Canwell*, is a first volume of a planned three-book study of the life and work of *Alex Toth;* the three volumes will cover Toth's groundbreaking and influential career in comics and animation in the depth and detail that it deserves.



This definitive biography is being created with the full cooperation of Toth's children; as a result, Mullaney and Canwell have complete access to the family archives. They've conducted dozens of interviews with Toth's peers, friends, and family members. In addition, Toth's fans and friends have loaned original artwork reproduced in the series.

Genius, Isolated will cover Toth's life and work through the early 1960s, a period that includes his early comics work and his move into animated cartoons. It will include a previously unknown, unfinished and unpublished penciled story from the early 1950s. A special section will collect, for the first time, the Jon Fury pages that Toth produced while in the army. It will feature an introduction by *Mark Chiarello*.

Genius, Illustrated, the second volume, will cover Toth's development into one of the leading character designers in TV animation, as well as his renewed career in comics with Warren, DC, and his creator-owned properties of the 70s and beyond, along with an examination of his final years.

Genius, Animated, the third volume, will be an art book with hundreds of Toth's model sheets and storyboards for shows such as ***Space Ghost and Dino Boy, Jonny Quest, Space Angel, Super Friends, The Fantastic Four, Hot Wheels, Thundarr,*** and ***Shazzan,*** as well as many full-color presentation pieces for selling new series to the networks. A slipcase for the full set will be available with the third book.

Genius, Isolated is slated for 2011 release from IDW under the Library of American Comics imprint.

Grell Signs on as Ardden EIC

Legendary comics writer and illustrator *Mike Grell* has joined Ardden Entertainment as the company's editor-in-chief. "I grew up reading Mike's comics and I am both humbled and thrilled that he has agreed to join our team," Ardden's Co-President *Brendan Deneen* said. "As we head into our fourth year as a company, I couldn't think of a better person to guide us."

Grell, best-known for ***The Warlord, Jon Sable Freelance,*** and ***Green Arrow,*** has worked for every major company in the industry during his almost four decades as a writer-artist. "After all these years on the other side of the desk, I'm excited to be part of Ardden Entertainment. This is where the action is," Grell said.

Grell will oversee Ardden's entire line, including its signature series, ***Flash Gordon,*** as well as the Atlas Comics relaunch.

Ardden's plans for 2011 include a new ***Flash Gordon*** series, ***Invasion of the Red Sword;*** a relaunch of ***Casper & the Spectrals;*** and several new series, including ***Comeback Kings*** (a satirical thriller in the vein of ***The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*** by *Matt Sullivan, Gabe Guarente, & Ethan Young*) and ***Minx*** (supernatural thriller by *Andrea Grant & Rey Arzeno*). Several more titles will be announced in early 2011.

Grell joins an expanding editorial team that includes consulting editor *Jim Krueger,* managing editor *Cody DeMatteis,* and assistant editors *P.J. Feffer* and *Zach Frankel.*

CSNsider

•*Alex Segura,* DC publicity manager whose name has appeared in ***CSN*** many times in the past few years, has left the company—but he hasn't left comics! Instead, he's joining Archie Comics as the publisher's Executive Director of Publicity and Marketing.

"We're thrilled to have someone with Alex's experience and ideas come onboard," *Jon Goldwater,* Archie Comics Co-CEO, said. "It's an exciting time for the company and we look forward to spreading the word about our books and characters with Alex's help."

"My first comic book was a copy of ***Betty & Veronica Double Digest,*** so coming to Archie is in many ways a homecoming," Segura said. "I'm energized, honored and very much looking forward to working with Jon and the gang on how best to promote the great collection of characters and stories Archie has to offer."

•*Amit Desai* has joined DC as Senior Vice President, Franchise Management for DC Entertainment. In his new role, Desai will develop and implement the individual franchise plans for Batman, Superman, Green Lantern, Wonder Woman, The Flash, ***Mad Magazine,*** Vertigo titles, and other DC properties. This will include driving wider cross-promotional support across all Time Warner divisions.

•Get ready to meet the all-new Venom in ***Amazing Spider-Man #654.1,*** a special issue by *Dan Slott & Paulo Siqueira* that offers new readers a convenient jumping-on point. Is the new Venom a friend or a foe? We'll all find out in early February!

•DC's next animated release (following February's ***All-Star Superman)*** will be ***Green Lantern: Emerald Knights,*** slated for June 7th release (just ten days before the theatrical debut of the big-budget high-profile ***Green Lantern*** live-action movie). ***Emerald Knights,*** an anthology film, will spotlight various members of the Green Lantern Corps, including Abin Sur, Kilowog, Mogo, Rori Dag, and Sinestro.

•Hill and Wang, publishers of the acclaimed 2009 adaptation of *Ray Bradbury's* ***Fahrenheit 451,*** has announced two more graphic novels based on Bradbury works. ***Ray Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles*** (a 160-page graphic novel featuring full-color art by *Dennis Calero)* and ***Ray Bradbury's Something Wicked This Way Comics*** (a 144-page graphic novel featuring black and white art by *Ron Wimberly)* are both slated for June 2011 release in both hardcover and trade paperback.

•The *Mike Mignola* cover for ***Hellboy: The Sleeping and the Dead #1,*** originally announced as a 1-for-5 incentive cover, will instead be the main cover for the book. It replaces the *Scott Hampton* cover, which was originally slated as the main cover and will now be the 1-for-5 variant. Both versions are slated for early January release.

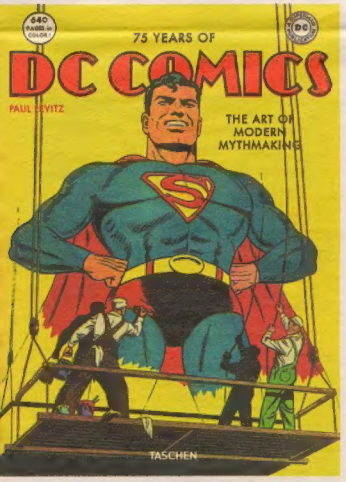
COMIC SHOP NEWS 20th ANNUAL RED K AWARDS

2010 is almost over, with 2011 just peering over the horizon. And long-time *CSN* readers know what that means: it's time for our 20th annual assortment of awards for the past year's achievements (some noteworthy and others quite dubious). So let's take a look at the best and worst that the past twelve months have delivered; join us as we present the ***CSN Red K Awards***—our way of recognizing the highlights and lowlights of the past year. (As Superman fans know, Red K can be *most* unpredictable!)

The "Life Unexpected" Award

Life With Archie: The Married Life

Who'd have thought that one of 2010's most through-provoking alternate reality series would appear under the Archie banner? ***The Married Life*** delivers two full-length comics stories in each $3.99 issue, making it one of the best bargains of 2010. Seeing Archie, Betty, Veronica, and the rest of the Riverdale gang having to deal with real-world problems like unemployment, marital strife, anger management, business difficulties, a struggling economy, in-law problems, political challenges, and the like? Priceless! And best of all, we can watch Dilton Doily drift from one reality to another, the only man who's fully aware that all of these possible worlds co-exist! Now if they'd only lose that ***Tiger Beat*** trade dress—this *ain't* your kid sister's Archie comic!



The "Worth the Weight" Award

75 Years of DC Comics HC

Taschen apparently took the old ***Seinfeld*** episode to heart: they've produced a coffee table history that can literally be a coffee table if you just put legs on it! This 700+ page 12" x 17" book is so hefty that it ships in its own carrying case complete with handle. Don't be afraid to open it up, though: it's filled with hundreds of illustrations and fascinating tidbits of DC history, all compiled by the company's former publisher and president, *Paul Levitz*.

The "G.I. Yo!" Award

G.I. Combat

The standout book in DC's October war comic event, with a doubt, was *Matt Sturges & Phil Winslade's* ***G.I. Combat,*** featuring an original tale of the WWII Haunted Tank and its crew. Never before has a writer so aptly channeled *Robert Kanigher* in a war story; the result is a Haunted Tank tale that stands right alongside the best of the originals, leaving us hopeful that we have a ghost of a chance of seeing more Sturges-Winslade Haunted Tank in the future.

The "Get the Lead Out" Award

Marvel Collector's Figure Magazine: Sasquatch & Puck

Apparently Sasquatch is a superhero lightweight, since Eaglemoss used cast resin, not lead, to make this "lead figure." (Does that mean it's safe for kids to eat?)

The "Monkey's Paw" Award

Batman: Odyssey

Remember that *H.H. Munro* story in which people's most fervent wishes were granted in such a way that they wished they'd never wished for them at all? We understood it a little bit better after reading *Neal Adams'* ***Batman: Odyssey.*** When we first heard that we were getting a new *Neal Adams* Batman book, we thought our wishes had been granted. Now, we're wishing he'd enlisted a writer to join him...

The "It's About Time" Award

Spider-Man: Big Time

We still miss the Peter-Mary Jane marriage (which is still one of the most charming aspects of *Stan Lee's* ***Spider-Man*** strip that appears in every issue of *CSN*), but *Dan Slott* has done such a great job of channeling the energy and enthusiasm of classic Silver Age Spidey stories than we can almost forget all that ***One More Day/One Moment in Time*** stuff!

The "Old One Two" Award

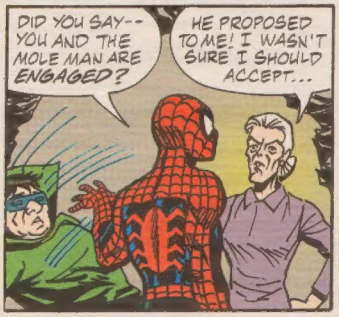
Brightest Day and Justice League: Generation Lost

Hey, guys? Biweekly comics are supposed to come out every *two weeks*, not every two weeks except for the months that have five Wednesdays in them. Now your twenty-six issue year-long events are going to run thirteen months each...

The "Leave It to Levitz" Award

Paul Levitz' Legion of Super-Heroes

Apparently, the only thing that DC needed to do to make the Legion successful was get *Paul Levitz* to write the book on a regular basis! Suddenly the Legion glory days are here again! And he's even reuniting with ***Great Darkness Saga*** collaborator *Keith Giffen* for this year's ***Legion Annual!***


DID YOU SAY-- YOU AND THE MOLE MAN ARE ENGAGED?
HE PROPOSED TO ME! I WASN'T SURE I SHOULD ACCEPT...
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...UNTIL I SAW YOU MANHANDLE THAT POOR, SENSITIVE SOUL.
YOU WERE RIGHT, MELVIN.
STAN LEE JERRY LIEBER 12-17
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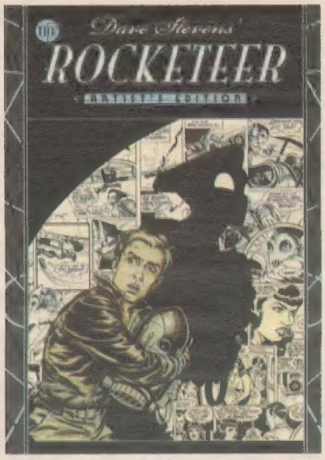
The "Out of Sight, Out of Mind" Award

Devil's Due

After years of declining market share, the floundering publisher decided to forego Diamond Distribution, only to discover that most people simply assumed they went out of business! Could it be a self-fulfilling prophecy? Well, all their titles appear to have moved to other publishers...



The "Art for Art's Sake" Award

Dave Stevens' The Rocketeer: Artist's Edition

This stunning oversized book, shot almost entirely from *Dave Stevens'* art and reproduced full sized, is as close as all of us will ever come to owning these originals. Now let's hope that IDW has some other Artist's Editions in the works for 2011! (And wouldn't it be great to see Silver Age classics by Ditko, Kirby, Kane, Manning, Infantino, Wood, and others presented in this format?)

The "I Do Like Wednesdays" Award

Wednesday Comics HC

The oversized faux-Sunday-funnies miniseries was impressive enough in its original format, but it's absolutely stunning in this oversized hardcover edition, which reorganizes the serialized weekly strip into individual story arcs. Now we can enjoy this wonderful material in the way it *should* be read, complete with unseen bonus pages and upgraded paper quality.

The "Overkill" Award

Superhero Deaths

Maybe 2011 could be the year in which *no* superheroes die? Wouldn't *that* be surprisingly different?

The "Comic Stripper" Award

Dean Mullaney

While some publishers settled for blotchy reproduction and bad layout, IDW's line of comic strip reprints are the outstanding exception. That's due to the uncomprising standards set by editor *Dean Mullaney*, who devotes the time to tracking down the best possible source material and supervises to ensure the highest-quality reproduction.

The "Best Laid Plans" Award

Image United

It started so well—a miniseries featuring every major Image superhero, with the original Image founders handling the art honors on each and every appearance of their characters in each and every issue. But here we are, months after the series should have been finished, and there's no sign of the fourth issue on the horizon...

The "Periodical Reid-ing" Award

Kevin Smith's Green Hornet

Kevin Smith may have a reputation for missed deadlines, but Dynamite managed to release Smith's adaptation of his unfilmed *Green Hornet* script on time in 2010. Give it a read and see just how good Smith's *Green Hornet* film might have been!

The MIA Award

Jim Steranko's Chandler: Red Tide GN

This updated, upgraded repackaging of *Jim Steranko's* long-out-of-print *Chandler* "visual novel" has once again been removed from Dark Horse's schedule. So how long has this project been in the works? Would you believe more than a decade? Hurry up, guys—some of *Steranko's* fervent fans from the 1960s are already on social security, and they'd like to see this book before they're pushing daisies!

The "Kidding Around" Award

2010's Explosion of Young-Reader Books

2010 was the year in which virtually every publisher recognized the young-reader market. From *Shrek* to *Cars* to *Young Justice* to *Spider-Man* to *The Muppets* to *Nancy Drew* to... well, the list gets longer with each passing month as publishers recognize the vital need to bring young readers into comics so that they can grow up to become the teenage and adult readers upon whom the industry depends. Pretty much every kid-friendly animated television series or film is on its way to comics, along with young-reader-friendly versions of such classics as *Star Wars* and *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*. There hasn't been so much attention devoted to our youngest readers since the glory days of the baby boomer era back in the early 1960s!

The "Anniver-Say What?" Award

Amazing Spider-Ham 25th Anniversary

Spelling errors crop into even the most meticulously edited works, but usually it's buried in the interior text, not prominently featured on the cover!

The "Number One With a Bullet" Award

Revolver

Matt Kindt's complex alternate-reality tale reminded us what a graphic novel could be. *Revolver* wasn't just a long comic book, it was a tightly woven tale that worked on multiple levels, requiring repeated readings to fully appreciate its subtleties. Hey, publishers, we want more books like this!

The MIA Award

Barry Windsor-Smith

Another year has passed without a major release from one of the most talented artists in comic book history...

The "Market Manipulation" Award

Pre-release sellouts

Are we the only ones who are tired of publishers setting print runs before doing final order cuts-offs or printing strictly to order, then hyping the book as "the next ultra-hot sellout title" and promoting it as eBay fodder? Notice how few of these books have a significant readership after their fourth or fifth issue? Want to make a bet what those "sellout" first issues will sell for a year or two from now? Whatever happened to creating a great book, promoting it, and then standing behind it with a solid overprinting to get the book in the hands of as many readers as possible?

The "Vampires Don't Have to Suck" Award

American Vampire

In a crowded field dominated by brooding, melancholy, emotionally overwrought vampires, how refreshing is it to see a rugged, determined bloodsucker? *American Vampire* not only refuses to follow the crowd in its depiction of the bloodthirsty undead, it also marks the first time that mega-selling author *Stephen King* has ever written original stories for comic books.

The "It Was Fun Wild It Lasted" Award

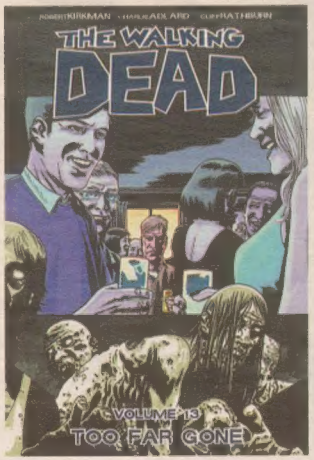
The WildStorm Universe

So many lost opportunities... Remember the excitement when *Grant Morrison & Jim Lee* were going to relaunch ***Wildcats***, while Morrison and *Gene Ha* were going to reboot ***The Authority***? Remember how all that excitement disappeared when both reboots became squandered opportunities? Even so, the Wildstorm superhero line always had the potential, but it was the Rodney Dangerfield of comics—it didn't get any respect, and it never seemed to be anyone's priority.

The "Everybody's Talkin' At Me" Award

New Avengers #7

This is an example of *Brian Bendis'* scripting at its best. What happens in this issue? Not much, really—but that gives Bendis a chance to show off his skill with dialogue. No other writer can make it this much fun to be a fly on the wall in the Avengers Mansion—and no other writer can effectively communicate the characters' distinct personalities by having them just *sit around and talk to each other*!



The "Book 'Em!" Award

The Walking Dead

Of course, creator/writer *Robert Kirkman* has always been great about keeping *Walking Dead* stories available in trade paperback and hardcover editions—but he deserves kudos for shipping the ***Walking Dead Volume 13***, which collected #s 73-78 of the series, the very same day that ***Walking Dead #79*** was released! All those readers who discovered this compelling zombie

drama as a result of the AMC television series were able to catch up to the current storyline even before the last episode aired—now *that's* good planning!

The "No Justice, No Peace" Award

Justice League of America

Don't care *what* it says on the cover—if it doesn't have Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, and the Flash in it, it ain't the Justice League...

The "Missed Opportunity" Award

Smallville comics

Yeah, we know that DC tried a ***Smallville*** series in the early days of the television series—but the show has built its own modified continuity to such a degree in the past few years that it could support its own comic book *line*, not just a single title. Chloe Sullivan, Tess Mercer, the Watchtower, the Blur; intriguingly different takes on Oliver Queen, Checkmate, the Suicide Squad, Aquaman, J'onn J'onnz, the Justice Society, the Legion of Super-Heroes; and a refreshingly bold vision of the Clark and Lois relationship—all of these deserve a place in an ongoing comic book series! ***Smallville*** beat ***Superman Earth One*** to the "ultimate-DCU" punch by years!

WAR · PRESENT AND PAST
FRONTLINE COMBAT
VOL. 1
HAMHUNG
CHANGJIN
OK, MARINES! WE'LL HAVE TO CLEAR THAT HILL BEFORE WE CAN GET OUT OF HERE! LET'S GO!

The MIA Award, Part 2

EC Comics

2010 passed without a single EC reprint release. These comics, featuring landmark work by some of the field's biggest names, should *always* be in print; let's hope that 2011 is the year that a major reissue initiative is announced!

The "Dickens" Award

The collected edition market

Today's trade paperback and hardcover market is a real "best of times, worst of times" dichotomy. It's the "best of times" because pretty much every comic book series worth reading either has been or is being collected in paperback or hardcover. It's the "worst of times," however, when you realize how many of those collected editions have gone out of print and are demanding stratospherically high prices. Try to find ***Absolute Editions*** of ***The World's Greatest Heroes*** or ***Hush*** or ***League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Volume One***, or ***Fantastic Four Omnibus Volume 2***, or ***Eternals Omnibus***, or ***Showcase Presents Sgt. Rock Volume 1***, or the ***Deadman*** and ***Green Lantern/Green Arrow*** hardcover collections, or hundreds of other now-out-of-print volumes and you'll see just what we mean!

The "Comic Book Bellwether" Award

Blake Bell

His 2009 biography of *Steve Ditko* offered a compelling and insightful look into the career of one of comics most fervently principled and enigmatic creators. This year, Bell followed that up with a fascinating look at *Bill Everett*, the creator of the Sub-Mariner and a sadly underrated comic book pioneer. Let's hope that Bell continues to offer us insightful biographies once a year for decades to come!

The "Conan's In Some Area" Award

Conan: The Newspaper Strips HC

If you had trouble making out the details in the Dark Horse reprinting of the *Conan* newspaper strips, you weren't alone: pretty much every Conan fan complained about the blotchy printing that murked up the fine linework of the strip and rendered backgrounds almost unidentifiable in some cases. (And why were the Sunday strips printed so very small when they had a whole page to work with?) While we'd rather have the strips in this format than not have them at all, we agree with those who wish that Dark Horse had taken the time to do more restoration to this almost-forgotten aspect of Conan comics history.

The "Too Many-Series" Award

Iron Man, Captain America, and Thor Miniseries

Yeah, we know that publishers want to ensure that there are plenty of collected storylines on the bookshelves when major comics-related motion pictures are released—but wouldn't it be even better if the miniseries were high-quality projects produced by some of the field's best talents, rather than a flood of lackluster projects? The really good projects in the bunch (***Thor: The Mighty Avenger***, for instance) got lost in the deluge of throwaway projects that were published only to ensure that there was another trade paperback on the shelves once the movies were released. Quality, not quantity, guys!...

The "Here's Lookin' Statue" Award

Bowen Designs

No company produces more striking, iconic, and eye-catching sculptures than Bowen Designs, founded by pioneering comics sculptor *Randy Bowen*. Setting the standards for both sculpture and painted finishing, Bowen Designs statues adhere to a rigorous standard of quality unmatched in the field. What's your secret, Randy?

The "Bucking the Trend" Award

$1 Comics

Kudos to the publishers who bucked the escalating price trend and offered $1 versions of first and/or key issues of some of their most successful series. These "buck-books" offered new readers a dirt-cheap way to sample new series—and the most savvy publishers made sure that those $1 books focused on series that were available in collected editions, so that readers who liked what they saw in the $1 book were able to get the full story the next time they stopped by their friendly neighborhood comic shop!

The "Magic Goes Away" Award

Wizard Magazine

Remember when ***Wizard*** had about as many pages as a metro phone book, and it outsold most comic books every month? Those glory days are gone; nowadays, the polybag seems almost as thick as the magazine, and ***Wizard*** has fallen off many fans' must-read list. Let's hope that the folks at ***Wizard*** can turn things around in 2011 (y'know, restoring the full price guide would be an excellent first step, guys...).

The "Stan and Deliver" Award

Boom Studios' Stan Lee Comics

Rather than marketing *Stan Lee's* latest creations to a retro market, Boom teamed up the comic book visionary with top writing talents. The plan paid off: we get quintessential *Stan Lee* concepts told in a boldly contemporary style targeted at readers who weren't around when Stan was writing the bulk of Marvel's line.

And Now... It's your turn!

You've seen our awards—now what accomplishments, near-misses, and/or failures would you like to recognize? Remedy our oversight with an award of your own! Remember, cleverness counts—and we encourage you to mind your manners and avoid vitriolic vituperation!

E-mail your nominations to *redk@comicshopnews.com* or snail-mail 'em to:

CSN Red K Awards
2770 Carillon Crossing
Marietta GA 30066

Not only will the best reader submissions see print in *CSN* in March, but we'll choose from among the published entries and award a few special prizes to the lucky winners!

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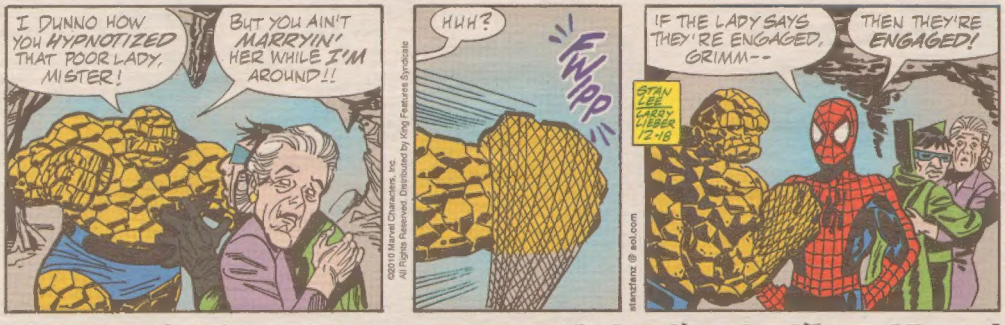
I DUNNO HOW YOU HYPNOTIZED THAT POOR LADY, MISTER!
BUT YOU AIN'T MARRYIN' HER WHILE I'M AROUND!!
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THEN THEY'RE ENGAGED!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 12-18
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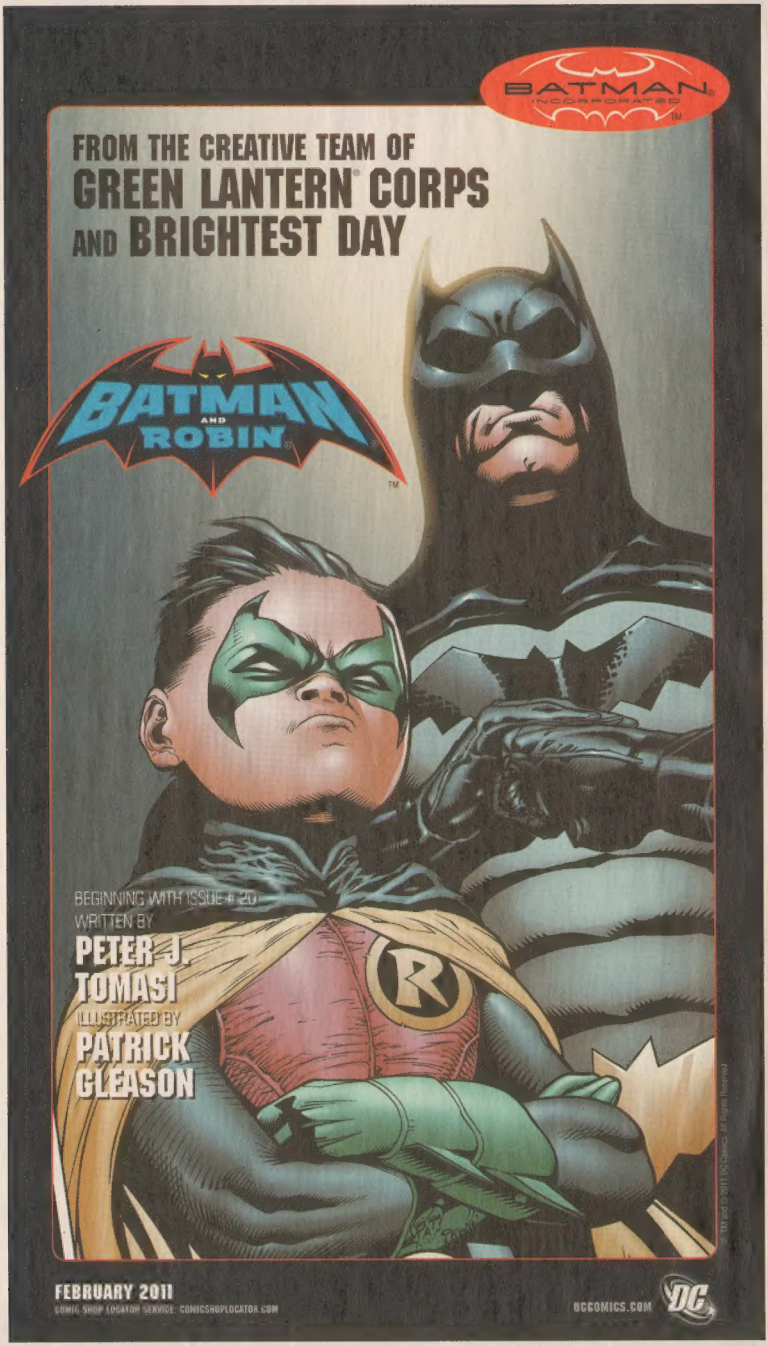
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BEGINNING WITH ISSUE #20
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ILLUSTRATED BY
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